

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



VA CELEBRATES NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognizes [National Family Caregivers Month](#) this November honoring the 5.5 million family members, friends and neighbors who care for Veterans suffering from chronic conditions, disabilities, disease or daily difficulties.



This year's theme, [#BeCareCurious](#), encourages family caregivers across the country to ask questions, explore options and share in the care decisions that affect the health and well-being of their loved ones.

"The VA is not only listening to our veterans, but to the voices of their families, caregivers and survivors," said VA Secretary Robert

Wilkie. "We are taking action to address their concerns and needs, as we improve the delivery of care, benefits and services."

The VA leads the country in providing benefits and services to caregivers in support of veterans. Caregivers play a critical role in the U.S. health care system and enable veterans to maintain their highest level of independence while remaining in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Recognizing the responsibilities of a caregiver can take a toll on one's physical, psychological, and financial health. The VA remains committed to creating awareness and providing [resources and information](#).

For more details on Family Caregivers Month, contact your local [VA Caregiver Support Coordinator](#). Access [VA Caregiver Support resources](#) or call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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National Family Caregivers Month - #BeCareCurious



VA EQUIPS 200,000 VETERANS WITH LIFESAVING NALOXONE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) [Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution](#) (OEND) program announced that from May 2014 to September 2019, the program issued naloxone — a medication used to block the effects of a potentially fatal opioid overdose — to more than 200,000 veterans.

The VA is a leader in naloxone distribution to health care patients and has documented more than 700 successful opioid overdose reversals resulting from its use.

“Veterans are twice as likely to die from accidental overdose compared to the general U.S. population,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Given the opioid crisis, it is our duty to do everything we can to help veterans avoid opioid overdose and thanks to the [Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016](#), naloxone education and naloxone prescriptions are free to veterans enrolled for VA care who may be at-risk of opioid overdose.”

The VA's OEND program takes a multidisciplinary approach which educates vulnerable patients about opioid risk and provides them with naloxone. The VA has also standardized [patient](#) and [provider](#) education, clinical guidance, clinical decision support tools identifying patients in danger of an overdose and national clinical notes to improve care post-overdose.

The department recently launched a [Rapid Naloxone Initiative](#) consisting of three elements, including, OEND, VA Police Naloxone and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) cabinet naloxone.

One hundred sixteen facilities have equipped 2,785 police officers with naloxone and 56 facilities have placed naloxone in 693 AED cabinets, with 126 opioid overdose reversals (120 by VA Police and 6 with AED cabinet naloxone).

OEND is one of many initiatives the VA has implemented to address the opioid epidemic. VA's [Opioid Safety Initiative](#) has made significant progress reducing reliance on opioid medication for pain management by more than 53% since 2012 and offers [pain care options](#) that are safer and more effective in the long run such as [yoga, acupuncture, tai chi and behavioral health approaches](#).

The VA also offers specialty [substance use disorder treatment](#) at every health care system using evidence-based psychosocial treatments and medications to effectively treat opioid use disorders and other substance use disorders.

Here's information about [VA's OEND](#) efforts and resources.

Veterans Affairs Substance Abuse Treatment Program



VETERANS STAND DOWN AND RESOURCE FAIR

Pennington County Veterans Service Officers Tom Vallette and Allan Taylor, and SDDVA Field Service Officer Will Huffmon, participated in the Veterans Stand Down and Resource Fair this week in Rapid City. This event helps prepare homeless veterans for the cold winter ahead.

Over 50 businesses and organizations were on hand to assist over 200 veterans.

All were on hand to provide information, literature, and visit with veterans about benefits and services available to them. The Pennington County team was also handing out laundry detergent.



THEY DANCED THE NIGHT AWAY!

Veterans and staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home enjoyed the Halloween spirit and danced the night away! Vicki Baum once said, "There are shortcuts to happiness and dancing is one of them."



SUPPORT FOR VETERANS COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE BORDERS

Saluting and honoring our veterans is a given on Veterans Day.

Students from Stoneman Elementary School in Pittsburg, California, went above and beyond by reaching across state borders to thank veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs!!!!!!!

Support for our heroes is unending!



MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT UPDATE

Looking for a way to continue serving our veterans all year long? Midwest Honor Flight has been blessed with many great volunteers but they are always looking to involve more passionate individuals to serve.

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, visit www.midwesthonorflight.org/volunteers for more information.

Upcoming Midwest Honor Flight fundraisers are as follows:

- Saturday, November 9 - Sioux City Musketeers Military Appreciation Night
- Saturday, November 9 - Merrill American Legion Dinner & Dance
- Monday, November 11 - The Barrel House in Sioux Falls to donate 25% on Veterans Day to Midwest Honor Flight
- Monday, November 11 - Maurice Reformed Church Fundraiser from 5-7 PM
- Friday, November 15 - Severance Brewery Night from 6-8 PM in Sioux Falls

On Saturday, November 16, Midwest Honor Flight is hosting a Mission 1-6 Flight Reunion for all past veterans, guardians and crew members (by invitation only).

WE HONOR VETERANS PROGRAM

Surrounded by friends and family, Francis Droz was presented a challenge coin and pin from SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock during a pinning ceremony held at Avera Maryhouse in honor of Droz' military service.

The pinning ceremony is part of the "We Honor Veterans" program. The program is a collaboration between the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), along with partner agencies like Avera@Home

The effort works to help hospice health professionals provide excellent end of life care catered to our nation's veterans and their families.



VETERANS CAN NOW ACCESS INFORMATION THROUGH HEALTH RECORDS ON IPHONE

In honor of veterans month this November, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is rolling out nationwide access for veterans to their VA health data, alongside their health records from other health care providers in one place, in the [Health Records](#) section of the [Health app](#) for iPhone.

Now, patients will be able to see their medical information from various participating institutions, including the VA, organized into one view – covering allergies, conditions, immunizations, lab results, medications, procedures and vitals – and will receive notifications when their data is updated.

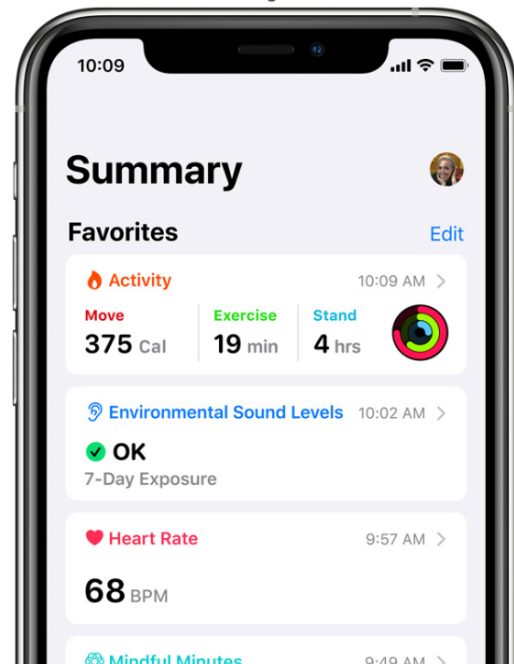
“We have delivered veterans an innovative new way to easily and securely access their health information,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Veterans deserve access to their health data at any time and in one place, and with Health Records on the Health app, the VA has pushed the veterans experience forward.”

This capability was developed through the VA’s [Veterans Health Application Programming Interface \(Veterans Health API\)](#), first revealed in February, and has topped 2,000 users. The Veterans Health API allows private sector organizations to create and deploy innovative digital applications that help veterans [access their health records](#) in new ways. Health Records data is encrypted and protected with the user’s iPhone passcode, Touch ID, or Face ID.

Beyond this effort with Apple, the VA plans to partner with other organizations to bring similar capabilities to other mobile platforms.

A more personal Health app. For a more informed you.

Now it’s easier than ever to organize and access your important health information. The new Health app consolidates data from your iPhone, Apple Watch, and third-party apps you already use, so you can view all your progress in one convenient place. See your long-term trends, or dive into the details for a wide range of health metrics.



The more you know,
the better you feel.

109TH ENGINEER BATTALION RETURNS TO SDNG

The 109th Engineer Battalion returned to the South Dakota Army National Guard following an uncasing ceremony at Range Road Armory in Rapid City, Nov. 2.

De-activated from service in August 2007 due to an organizational transformation, the 109th returns as part of the SDARNG's force structure changes announced last year.

The uncasing of the unit's colors (flag) is a military custom and tradition that signals the re-activation of a unit and continuation of its history and lineage.

With about 160 soldiers in the unit, the mission of the 109th is to coordinate and execute tactical operations involving mobility, counter mobility and survivability tasks on the battlefield. The 109th also provides command and control for about 400 soldiers in five assigned units throughout the state to support training, administrative and logistical requirements to maintain readiness in support of state and federal missions.

"It's an incredible honor to be the incoming commander for the 109th Engineer Battalion," Lt. Col. Dennis Bickett said during the ceremony. "The 109th has a rich history. We need to train so if called upon the 109th will live up to the awesome legacy established by the warriors who have come before us."

The 109th traces its history and lineage back to 1884 as part of the Dakota Territory Militia. Its history includes federal service during the Philippine Insurrection, World Wars I and II and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 109th also activated for federal service in Germany during the Korean War.

"The 109th Engineer Battalion has answered the call time and again over the last 135 years," Bickett said. "Now we need to rapidly build that readiness so the 109th will be ready to meet the needs of our state and nation again."

Over the next year, Bickett said the unit would be working on filling its ranks, focusing on individual and occupational training and professional development schools for its soldiers, and planning hard, realistic training as part of the Golden Coyote training exercise in June 2020.

Units assigned to the 109th include the 109th Forward Support Company (Rapid City), 842nd Engineer Company (Spearfish, Sturgis and Belle Fourche), 155th Engineer Company (Wagner and Parkston), and the 216th and 451st Engineer Detachments (Rapid City).



SBA CELEBRATES VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Each year the U.S. Small Business Administration celebrates, connects, and empowers service members during National Veterans Small Business Week (NVSBW). We hope you will join SBA district offices, resources partners, and other organizations as we celebrate the veteran- and military-owned business community.

This year's theme is **Mission #VetBiz Success**, where we will highlight the tools and resources used to help veterans on their journey to small business success.

You can follow them on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for up-to-date information.



NATIONAL VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 4-8, 2019

SBA.GOV/VETBIZ #VETBIZ

GIFTING CONTINUES FOR THE STATE CEMETERY FOUNDATION

Kudos and a big SHOUT OUT to Grand Falls Casino in Larchwood, Iowa, and their partners for their October "Give Back Program." Funds generated from the "Give Back Program" were given to the State Veterans Cemetery foundation for a total contribution of \$13,125 !

A big SHOUT OUT to First PREMIER Bank and PREMIER Bankcard for their pledge of \$25,000 to the State Veterans Cemetery foundation!

The logo for Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort, featuring a stylized 'G' and 'F' monogram followed by the text 'GRAND FALLS CASINO & GOLF RESORT'.The logo for First PREMIER Bank PREMIER Bankcard, featuring a stylized 'P' monogram followed by the text 'First PREMIER Bank PREMIER Bankcard'.

VA INNOVATORS NETWORK ENLISTS FEDTECH TO HELP TRANSFORM EMPLOYEE IDEAS INTO VETERAN SOLUTIONS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has contracted with start-up organization [FedTech](#) to provide training to VA employees during FedTech's Innovation Boot Camp Nov. 19 - 21 in Washington, D.C.

The instruction will be provided throughout a one-year period to more than 150 employees from 34 Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Innovators Networks (iNET), sponsored medical centers.

Subsequent web-based training will be provided and will focus on building skills and testing innovations that may influence how the VA delivers care and service.

"The VHA Innovators Network helps find and invest in solutions to front-line issues," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Schooling like this is essential to ensuring growth and advancement of VA's innovation culture and fostering continuous learning while we work to deliver creative solutions that can positively impact veteran's lives."



The VA's iNET is comprised of a network of VHA facilities and employees across the country. To participate, these 'employee innovators' competed designing innovative solutions to address front-line challenges. Once selected, they received start-up funds to test or create a prototype solution and an opportunity to attend FedTech's training. More than one million veterans have been directly impacted by innovation activities stemming from iNET and more than 10,000 VA employees have trained in innovation competencies.

As part of the training, FedTech will provide a network of experienced business professionals to train VHA employee innovators and discuss new ways to use innovation and creativity within the VA. FedTech's training modules will be unique to VHA and include topics such as creating a business model canvas from an idea, developing "sprint" milestones, prototyping an idea into a potential product with evaluation of potential customers, understanding the economic and operational considerations for scale and modeling return on investment and capturing user testimonials.

FedTech has also worked with DOD, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of Energy, Department Operations Council, Department of the Interior and Department of Transportation. FedTech's programs focus on bringing Federal Government technology to the commercial market place, or as in the case of VA, helping employees to transform healthcare from within VA, using the tools already available.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 10—Military and Veterans Dinner—Aberdeen First United Methodist Church (502 S. Lincoln Street)—12:30 pm (CST)
- Nov 11—State Offices Closed
- Nov 11—Smiles for Freedom—Jackson Dental Clinic—Belle Fourche
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Ceremony—Belle Fourche High School Rec Center—1301 12th Ave—9:00 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Ceremony—Belle Fourche Elementary School—1816 Valley Drive—10:00 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Ceremony—Belle Fourche Long Term Care—13th Ave—10:30 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Meal—Custer Jr/Sr High School—11:25 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Meal—Custer Elementary School—10:55 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Ceremony—Custer Veterans Memorial Park—11:11 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Luncheon—Mitchell—Davison County Fairgrounds (3200 W. Havens)—Mitchell—Doors open at 10:30 am, lunch starts at 11:30 and program starts at 12:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Potluck Lunch—Custer VFW #3442 Post Home—12:00 noon (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Program—Custer Armory Gym—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Ceremony—Belle Fourche Middle School—2305 13th Ave—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Social—Custer Armory Lunch Room—3:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 11—Students' Veterans Lunch—Hermosa School—10:55 am (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Day Program—Hermosa School—2:15 pm (MT)
- Nov 11—Heroes Reception—Hermosa School—3:15 pm (MT)
- Nov 11—Veterans Soup and Chili Feed—#303 Hermosa Post Home—5:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 14—Veterans Day Program—Elk Mountain School—Elk Mountain—2:30 pm (MT)
- Nov 15—ERLS Wills for Heroes—Sioux Falls VA Medical Center—Room D39 (2501 W. 22nd Street)—9:00 am-4:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 26—Bridge Dedication—Hot Springs—1:30 pm (MT)
- Nov 27—VA Stakeholders Meeting—Sioux Falls VAHCS—10:30 am (CT)
- Nov 28-29—State Offices Closed
- Dec 3—Governor Noem's Budget Address
- Dec 4—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—Noon (CT)
- Dec 5—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—American Legion Post 17—Watertown—Noon (CT)
- Dec 7—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—VFW—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
- Dec 9—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony—Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial at Capitol Lake in Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
- Dec 11—Sioux Falls VA Stakeholders Conference Call
- Dec 23-25—State Offices Closed

UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

2020

Jan 1—State Offices Closed

Jan 14—State of the State Address

Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception

Feb 21-23—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center—
Oacoma

Mar 25—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)

Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown

May 15—17—DAV State Convention—Brookings

May 30—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 7

Jun 18-21—American legion State Convention—Huron

Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8 (Tentative)

Oct 11—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 (Tentative)



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